

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 280 116

CS 505 570

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TITLE Autonomous Technology: Rhetoric of the Replicants in Contemporary Cinema.
PUB DATE Apr 87
NOTE 26p.; Parts may be marginally legible because of print irregularities. Paper presented at the Joint Meeting of the Central States Speech Association and the Southern Speech Communication Association (St. Louis, MO, April 9-12, 1987).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Viewpoints (120)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Characterization; Content Analysis; Discourse Analysis; Fiction; *Films; Media Research; Persuasive Discourse; *Rhetoric; Rhetorical Criticism; Technological Advancement; *Technology
IDENTIFIERS *Autonomous Technology; Blade Runner (Movie); *Replicants; Rocky IV (Movie); Terminator (Movie)

ABSTRACT

Developing a theme drawn from speculative writing of the nineteenth century--that technology, like biological species, undergoes a process of evolution--this paper explores the thesis that if technology divides from its human creators and perfects itself until it gains the capacity for self replication, it cannot return to its creator. Using rhetorical narration to chart how technological agency is becoming autonomous from the human agent, the paper analyzes three films: "Rocky IV," "Blade Runner," and "The Terminator." After showing how the mythic evolution of technology's perfection of itself is represented in the films, the paper considers what this myth implies for the state of the whole human being, as well as for the possibilities of reclaiming technology as an integral part of humanity. (FL)

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Presented at the Southern Speech Communication and Central States Speech
Communication Association joint convention, St. Louis, Missouri, April, 1987.

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AUTONOMOUS TECHNOLOGY: RHETORIC OF THE REPLICANTS IN CONTEMPORARY CINEMA

"The process of a single deed can quite literally endure throughout time until mankind itself has come to an end."

—Hannah Arendt The Human Condition

Modern humanity is still enamored with its machines. "High tech" has inevitably replaced "the industrial revolution" as the reigning epithet of moral progress, and mellowed the word "machine" to almost-quaintness. A new earthly region has been delineated as "the third world," mostly on the basis of its lag in technological development. The tools we have made continue to seep into every crevice of modern life, providing our comfort, defining our work, transforming our play, extending our selves. Sir Francis Bacon's grand vision of the "empire of man" has been spectacularly achieved. We have unlocked the secrets of nature in order to command her (Bacon, 1955, pp. 537-39; Winner, 1977, p. 23). We stand at the technological controls of an awesome Leviathan.

But—do we? Who, or what, controls human artifice—the maker or the made? The idea that command has shifted from people to their "techniques," that technology has even begun to operate autonomously, has become a significant inter-disciplinary hypothesis (Winner, 1977, p. 19), finding expression in the works of such theorists as Karl Marx (1906), Martin Heidegger (1966), Renee Dubos (1968), Werner Heisenberg (1958), Herbert Marcuse (1964), John Kenneth Galbraith (1968), Bruno Bettelheim (1960), Hannah Arendt (1958), Marshall McLuhan (1965), and Langdon Winner (1977). Many have questioned the widespread Western assumptions that people know best what they have made, that the things they make are under their firm control, that technology is a neutral means to an end (Winner, 1977, p. 25). In the words of Jacques Ellul (1964, p. 14), "Technique has become autonomous; it has fashioned an omnivorous world which obeys its own laws and which has renounced all tradition." Many of these statements assume a foreboding tone, alleging the question of free will to be at stake. As Winner puts it (1977, p. 43):

Autonomous technology is ultimately nothing more or less than the question of human autonomy held up to a different light. And those who remain supremely confident about our prospects there have not been paying attention to what is happening everywhere about them.

While scholars have expressed what is happening everywhere about them to their specialized audiences, they are not the only ones who have been paying attention. The idea of autonomous technology has long been prevalent in art and literature as well, intriguing the likes of Charles Dickens, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Mark Twain, Henry Adams, William Blake, E. E. Cummings, George Orwell, Karol Capek, Arthur Clarke, Kurt Vonnegut, and many others. It is imaginative works that carry the most rhetorical force with those Aristotle called "untrained thinkers," noting that for them, "intellect by itself moves nothing" (Grimaldi, 1980, p. 28). These "fictional" works both reflect and mold the popular consciousness (Rushing and

Frentz, 1978), expressing, often profoundly, the way technology is collectively experienced.

Fictional accounts of life with technology are more likely to be "religious" than purely scientific, for most contemporary members of society have only fragmented knowledge of complex technical systems; each person can know only a few things very well (Winner, 1977, p. 284). Eliot contends that most people must generate "faith" in techniques upon which they depend but about which they have little intellectual knowledge. Thus, popular stories generally imbue technology with mystery, magic, and the sacred (1964, pp. 141-46). Whereas scholars often echo Hobbes in claiming that a complex interconnected system has a soul of its own (Winner, 1977, p. 280), fanciful works depict this spirit dramatically. The religious, or mythic, always includes the profane as well as the sacred, of course, and fantasies of autonomous technology are no exception. Particularly in the science fiction and horror genres, the profane appears as a surprise to an unsuspecting and often forgetful creator. An apparatus yields unintended consequences: "A ghost appears in the network. Unanticipated aspects of technological structure endow the creation with an unanticipated telos" (Winner, 1977, p. 280).

The prototype of such "ghost in the network" stories is Mary Shelley's Frankenstein (1934). A well-intentioned young scientist fashions a replica of a man from spare body parts and plastics. In a trance of creative compulsion, Victor Frankenstein fills it with life, and is immediately repulsed when his handiwork opens its eyes. Frankenstein then spends the rest of his ill-fated life trying not to open his own eyes, not to look directly at his Monster. He tries first to forget him by going to sleep, then to cure his prodigy's loneliness by creating a bride. Finally, deprived of family and friends by his creation-turned-monster, Frankenstein tracks his fiend into the Arctic wastelands to kill him. All attempts fail. As Winner recognizes, the novel reflects humanity's tendency to forget its inventions, to shirk responsibility for their place in the overall scheme of things, to remedy the problems technology creates by producing more technology. "Technology, then, allows us to ignore our own works. It is license to forget" (1977, p. 315).

While humanity-the-creator tends to forget, however, humanity-the-mythmaker does not. (It is the very function of myth to record what the conscious mind does not see.) At the end of Shelley's tale, a remorseful Monster promises to end his own fire-born life with an equally fiery death. But his act is never consummated, leaving the reader to wonder if the Monster wanders still. In Frankenstein, "man is already in the background, either perished or . . . a spectator only; it is the Monster to whom the last act of the drama, as yet unwritten, is left" (Small, 1972, p. 293). Indeed, this fiend has hatched a whole race of descendants, and the last act is still being written.

In contemporary times, these technological offspring appear with increasing frequency in popular films. As in literature, either their coming to life or their disobedience is usually met with surprise by their creators. While modern monsters may occasionally be benevolent or harmless, as in War Games (1983), Electric Dreams (1984), D.A.R.Y.L. (1985), and Short Circuit (1986), they are more often hostile and threatening, as in 2001: A Space Odyssey (1968), Westworld (1973), Futureworld (1976), The Demon Seed (1977), Magie (1979), Saturn 3 (1980), Christine (1984), Runaway (1984), and

Re-animator (1985). With increasingly more sophisticated resources of evil, these latter-day demons seem determined to eliminate their makers. Until recently, total patricide has not generally been achieved; after all, someone must be left behind to engineer future mechanical generations. With 1984's The Terminator, however, even this dependency of robot upon human has been severed, for the robots have discovered how to procreate. "Technique engenders itself" (Ellul, 1964, p. 87). People become superfluous, even threatening.

In our view, all the aforementioned statements of autonomous technology, theoretical and fantastic, together form a rhetoric of warning that time is running out for homo plasticator. If humankind refuses to reclaim techniques as part of itself, techniques will claim the world as its exclusive domain. In film, this rhetoric takes the form of an evolving myth, which is consistent with a central theme in speculative writing of the past century—that technology, like the biological species, undergoes a process of evolution (Winner, 1977, p. 57). Our thesis is that the myth predicts and warns against the following situation: if technology divides from its human parent, perfecting itself until it gains the capacity for self-replication, it cannot return to its creator, with whom it was once consubstantial. Rather, technology becomes "rotten with perfection," in Kenneth Burke's terms, perpetuating its path of independence to the logical conclusion of genocide. Burke explains:

A given terminology contains various implications, and there is a corresponding 'perfectionist' tendency for men to attempt carrying out those implications [It] is like . . . an author who has an idea for a novel, and who will never rest until he has completely embodied it in a book. Insofar as any of these terminologies happen also to contain the risks of destroying the world, that's just too bad . . . (1966, p. 17).

The myth is currently announcing that this crisis point is upon us.

In the present work, we reconstruct one form of the evolving myth of autonomous technology. Our own work in rhetorical narration offers one perspective for examining this myth. Fusing a teleology of wholeness with a narrative sense of rhetoric, this critical perspective uses fluctuations within, between, and among Burke's pentadic terms (as names for dramatic constituents of stories) to plot how sequences of particular messages announce the culture's relationship to the moral purpose of unity—of parts of the individual, of individuals with society, and of society with the cosmos (Frentz, 1984, 1985; Rushing, 1985, 1986a, 1986b). We employ rhetorical narration here to chart how technological agency is becoming autonomous from the whole human agent, defining a mythic path away from unity. We generate this myth from three contemporary films: Rocky IV, Blade Runner, and The Terminator. We then suggest what this emerging myth implies concerning the loss of our human potential, our "aura," and for its possible recovery through the redemption of technology.

Cinematic Analyses

Rocky IV

Almost a decade has slipped past since the original Rocky clubbed its way into the hearts of the American public. At the end of their first exhilarating battle, a battered Rocky and an equally beleaguered champion, Apollo Creed, embrace in begrudging respect. "Ain't gonna be no rematch! Ain't gonna be no rematch!" gasps Creed. "Don't want none!" affirms Rocky. But they do "want one"; in fact, they continue to serve up as many rematches as filmgoers are willing to attend. At this point, Rocky V is rumored to be in the works. If the ever-continuing saga of Rocky Balboa has not exhausted the public's patience or pocketbooks, it has taken its toll upon critics, who have noted how the imaginative ingenuity of the original has become a frozen formula which Stallone shamelessly repeats without substantial variation in each of the supplements. As Newsweek observed of the relentless sequels, "Rocky became less a character, the wised-up Candide from back-street Philadelphia, than a checklist of virtues and a balance sheet of pain, given and received" (Goldman, 1985, p. 60).

Most critics saw in Rocky IV what the formula dictated they would see: Rocky comfortably settles into his role as folk hero, America's very own single combat warrior. Rocky is tempted by his now bosom buddy, Apollo Creed, to finance an exhibition match between Creed and the Russian amateur champion, Ivan Drago. Drago kills Creed, and Rocky vows revenge. Rocky doubts himself, fears Drago but, as always, decides a man's gotta do what a man's gotta do. So Rocky goes to Russia, gets tough, defeats Drago, and in so doing wins the Russian people over to the American way of life. The formula is abundantly present in Rocky IV. Surely, it is not a great film. However, if experience of the film is numbed by its superficial textual conventions, a rhetorical sub-text, present in the first three films but considerably amplified in the fourth, is likely to go unnoticed. Beneath the rather embarrassing flag-waving, Americans—even Rocky before his obligatory conversion—appear as ugly and degenerate as the Russian bureaucrats. Our claim is that the sub-text of Rocky IV asserts that technology is making over the human agent, regardless of nationality, systematically emptying it of moral purpose; thus, it must be stoically renounced.

As Rocky IV would have it, technology pollutes quite differently in the United States than it does in Russia. In America technology is primarily "recreative," incarnated as televisions, Sony walkmans, VCRs, motorized kiddie cars, and robots. America's is a technology of leisure, gadgetry, labor-saving devices, and a never-ending series of electronic amusements with ever-decreasing half-lives. In a social milieu of technological recreation where citizens are impacted from the outside in, they are emptied of integrity in two different, but equally devastating ways. For the lazy proletariat, the result is Pauli—everyone's Ugly American in spite of his "I wanna be youse, Rock" babble before the most recent fight. Across all four Rocky films, Pauli has never been a particularly endearing character. Soft, greedy, manipulative, and whiny, he seems to typify the consequences of recreational technology; he wants his comics, his TV, his "female" robot (a sort of Stepford wife without the flesh) to grant his every whim. He is so pathetically inept that he is unable to navigate a simple path to a Russian cabin where Rocky goes to train, and flounders helplessly in a knee-deep snowbank.

As another victim of recreational technology, Apollo Creed is a sadder case than Pauli, for unlike Pauli, Creed has talent. Like Mohammed Ali, upon whom his character is transparently patterned, Creed is a superb fighter. "Remember," Creed chides Rocky prior to an unofficial sparring match that both ends Rocky III and begins Rocky IV. "You fight great, but I'm a great fighter." But Creed's talent has been eroded by a different variant of recreational technology—the show, the spectacle, the pseudo-event, the electric circus—which, although good for the ego, extracts its pound of flesh from the person as moral agent. By flattering appearance and marginalizing reality, pseudo-events break down human substance, hollow out all semblances of personhood, and leave their willing victims nothing but style, posture, pure form, an inflated sense of self. Moments before Creed's ill-fated meeting with the Russian, Rocky tries to remind Apollo of the genuine nature of the impending event. "This is just an exhibition—it don't mean nothin'." But Apollo has subjected himself to one too many spectacles, and has been stripped of the ability he once had to see through them. He stares incredulously: "You're wrong man—it means everything—it's us against them!" Creed's last show—a carnival so over-produced and utterly banal that both the audience and Rocky wince in embarrassed recognition—is a fitting scene for the tragedy to come, for when style meets mechanized physical perfection, the outcome is quick, brutal, and final. Creed's death reveals the ultimate consequence for the human agent evacuated by technological recreation, and that insight is not lost on Rocky as he labors through his own bathetic eulogy for Creed: "You always gave them [the public] what they wanted. Sometimes I didn't understand that. Now I do."

If American technology erodes from the outside in, leaving purged vessels of stylized veneer, Russian technology corrupts from the inside out, perfecting nascent physical potential through blood-doping, steroid ingestion, and Nautilus-for-the-state. Though Soviet technology leaves the agent "hard" rather than "soft," the cost of such physical perfection is the anesthetizing of the human spirit—feelings, creativity, compassion, self-awareness. Pauli may be a mushroom, Apollo Creed an image, but Ivan Drago is an automaton—dull, efficient, and relentless. His comments always resemble the vocalized print-out of a computer. "You will lose," he tells Creed before their fight. Looking down at a dying Creed, Drago remarks matter-of-factly, "If he dies, he dies." "I cannot be beaten. I defeat all men," he announces after Creed's destruction. "I must break you," he tells Rocky moments before their own encounter. Drago is the dehumanized epitome of Russian technology, to be sure, but Americans seem to be implicated as well by this "dragon" of techne. It is difficult not to recall the U.S.' own continuing shame over blood doping among the Olympic cycling team, the rampant use of steroids and other drugs in sports, and the image of the Dallas Cowboys, "America's Team," honing themselves in a high-tech "factory" in North Dallas Forty.

Ever since Rocky won his first fight, he has walked a thin line in the sequels between moral integrity and Pauli's corruption, descending further into the temptations of wealth in each film, and requiring the rigors of spartan re-training for each redemption. By Rocky IV, his living situation is blatantly ostentatious, and he is once again losing his edge. As Creed could not, Rocky sees through his glossy life, and looks at the scene he has allowed himself to inhabit. In one of the few instances of extended dialogue in the film, a frightened and confused Adrian asks, "You'd give up everything for this [the impending fight with Drago]?" "'This' ain' everything, Adrian. 'This' is

nothin," Rocky replies. He will renounce his possessions and fight Drago without pay. What is more, he will leave the familiar comforts of his country and train—in stark, ascetic quarters of his own choosing—in Russia.

Rocky's "vision," if it can be called that, is one of romantic "de-volution," a going back to a primordial state which pre-dates ideology and technology, when man was undivided by nation and at one with nature. His respect for the frozen, yet energizing fecundity of the earth and for unencumbered work, which humanizes rather than exploits nature, suggests an attempt to escape the ravages of all technology on the human purposive agent. In the obligatory fight training montage, the camera continually juxtaposes Rocky "working"—chopping wood, piling rock for fences, helping Russian peasants—with Drago "working out"—running on treadmills, hitting impact machines, lifting weights. The contrast is a fairly obvious one between the human who acts through intrinsic purpose and the humanoid who moves through the manipulation of someone (or thing) else (Burke, 1969). Cut off from nature, Drago's training-as-movement deadens the spirit as it perfects the body. Humanizing nature through work (movement guided by purpose transformed into action), Rocky conjoins body and spirit into the consummate warrior.

The spiritual fervor of the training—a recurrent theme in all four Rocky films—is now depicted in the universal terms of a descent into Hell. "Now you're gonna go through hell—worse than any nightmare you ever dreamed," proclaims Rocky's trainer and guru, "but in the end, you're gonna be the one standing." By contrast, Drago is propelled rather than inspired, never really relating to those around him. His training routine, every bit as physically arduous as Rocky's, is only partial insofar as it assures, at best, bodily completion. But, in response to Adrian's last plea to call off the fight, "You can't win!" Rocky replies, "Maybe not. But to beat me, he'll have to kill me. And to kill me he'll have to look into my heart. And to do that, he's gotta be ready to die himself." The inferences don't unfold flawlessly, but the point is fairly clear: if the impending struggle transcends physical strength, Drago will have meager resources to fall back upon.

As always, there are a few "moments" in this fight that determine its direction. The first occurs when, after absorbing a beating vicious enough to kill ten mere mortals, Rocky connects and cuts Drago. The gash at once re-humanizes Drago by making him cognizant of his mortality, and it makes him less vulnerable insofar as it stirs his humanity from its own prolonged slumber induced by too many chemicals and machines. In response to an angry chide from an official party member from the politbureau's box, an enraged Drago jerks the Gorbachev look-alike in the air by the throat and screams, "I win for me!" He doesn't, of course. As the fighters stagger to their gory conclusion, the Russian people—not the technocrats and political hacks—change their allegiance so that at the end they are hysterically pro-Rocky. Despite the fact that this is an improbable and absurdly pro-American ideological pitch in the guise of an apolitical image, we would also suggest that the sub-text moral is that all those people who are not as yet completely co-opted by technocracy, independent of their respective nations, latently want an Edenic hero, a person who is at one with nature, pre-political, and redeemed through the sacrifice of a technology that corrupts.

Writing on the The Exorcist in 1975, Frentz and Farrell note that we still seem able to recognize the evil of endorsing an exclusively positivistic view

of humanity, although we appear so numbed and resigned to such a view that it may well take an image as archetypally evil as the possessed child to wake us up to action. But the demon of the exorcism was not of this world, not of our making (p. 47). Not so with Ivan Drago, Apollo Creed, and Pauli. They are quite clearly sculpted from our own hands, and thus are also our victims. Because the enemy is now us, it is harder to see and more difficult to change. The warning, however, seems unmistakable: if technology as one part of humanity continues to evolve on its own, the time will come—in the not-too-distant-future—when the perfected part will turn upon its parent and deprive it of will, and the outcome—unlike the denouement in Rocky IV—may not be that easy to call.

Blade Runner

As we move from Rocky IV to Blade Runner (a move back in chronological time of the film's production but forward in the teleological time that charts this narrative), humanity is considerably closer to its technological perfection. 1985 technology could "re-make" Ivan Drago, but 2019 technology can now "make" replicants from scratch, or, more literally, from synthetic recombinations of the DNA molecule. In Blade Runner the effort to perfect ourselves technologically is no longer burdened by the necessity of starting with a human agent (or, as in Frankenstein, with parts of human agents) whose perfectability is limited to his or her human parameters. Because human purpose need not be exorcised, agency is freer to develop its own purpose. Ironically, starting with less means ending with more.

Rushing (1986) earlier examined the film scenically as a phase in the evolution of America's frontier myth from land to space. She argued that the pollution of a finite, land-locked locale no longer able to contain an ever-expanding technology gives rise to "agencies-as replicants," who mirror the world they are forced to inhabit (1986, p. 15-17). Here we refocus our attention from the scene to the agent/agency/purpose ratio; with the shift in focus, Blade Runner becomes an event of extreme rhetorical significance. It represents a crisis point in the technological extension of humanity, portraying the consequences of choice when human agents have reproduced their rational parts to a point beyond which they will sever all connections with and dependence upon their human creators.

The rhetorical sub-text of Blade Runner is obscured more by a genre than a formula. The surface text is a futuristic replay of the old Phillip Marlowe detective stories immortalized by Humphrey Bogart. The plot line involves a small group of "replicants" (androids) who have formed a "community" and returned illegally to earth from space outposts to confront their manufacturer, Mr. Tyrell, about their mortality. The Los Angeles Police Department catches wind of the replicants' return, and coerces Deckart (Harrison Ford) out of retirement as a "Blade Runner"—a bounty-hunter of replicants. Deckart uses his savvy plus a marvellous assortment of high-tech trappings to hunt down and terminate the replicants. In the process, he meets the reclusive Mr. Tyrell, falls in love with a female replicant named Rachel, is almost killed by each of the replicants before he prevails, and, in a fitting battle with the replicant leader, Roy, faces some of his own human inadequacies before emerging victorious to claim his reward—life ever after with Rachel.

As before, *Blade Runner* is much more than our recounting of its surface plot. To unravel the sub-textual message of crisis we turn first to the characters. In an eerie variation on the "mad scientist" persona of other genres, Mr. Tyrell is the resident genius in genetic engineering and bio-mechanics—a sort of Walt Disney gone sour. He manifests the ultimate hybrid he competes with the gods by fashioning human-like creations in his own image. As extensions of human rational, tool-making capacities, these humanoids are designed as pure agencies to carry out human purposes of labor and pleasure. Brilliant and proud, Tyrell demonstrates his bio-technical achievements to Deckart. Rachel, his ultimate brainchild, is, he tells an already-convinced Deckart, "very special." Possessed of a porcelain delicacy and aesthetic refinement rarely encountered in humans, she is the only replicant who believes she is human. Tyrell has implanted in her a microchip of memory from his niece, giving her a false family history to keep her pacified and deceived into believing she is human. In this near-perfect act of technological reproduction, Tyrell co-opts one of the most essentially human endowments—that of remembered personal history—as a means of programming his artifice with contentment, in hopes that a pseudo-purpose will keep his agency from developing a purpose of her own. Typically, it takes a well-trained examiner less than ten questions to identify an earlier race of replicants (Nexus 6), which are physically indistinguishable from humans. It takes Deckart over 100 questions to identify Rachel. After painfully acknowledging her identity (or lack thereof), Rachel's countenance is filled with sadness, resignation, perhaps even an ill-defined gratitude toward Deckart for discovering and sharing with her the truth of her origins.

Rachel may be Tyrell's crowning achievement, but he was not always quite this clever. Like his literary prototype, Victor Frankenstein, Tyrell created the less advanced generation of replicants a bit too quickly. Having no history apart from the production lines on which they were assembled, yet being a dangerously complete actualization of the DNA molecule's full potential, it was highly probable that the Nexus 6 strain would develop feelings on their own (the rudiments of individualized purpose) and with them a longing for origin, roots, beginnings. And that quest would lead them, Tyrell knows by now, back to him—just as Frankenstein's monster eventually found his way back to the good scientist. As a preventative, Tyrell programmed all Nexus 6 replicants with an irreversible four-year life span. He's betting, of course, that the termination dates will occur before one of his offspring returns.

As the optimal Nexus 6, Roy is brilliant, volatile, beautiful, compassionate (toward his own kind), and extraordinarily powerful. He also understands perfectly his pre-programmed lifespan, and has become driven by that same rage for self-preservation which grips all humans in moments of recognized mortality. His is an awesome presence of fragmented contradictions. He has an ironic sense of his own predicament, a deep care for Priss (the replicant cynically described by a police lieutenant as "your basic pleasure model"), no regard or respect for human life, and still, the capacity to act in a consummately human way.

With intimations of immortality, Roy's purpose is to confront Tyrell, who lives in an inaccessible penthouse high atop a grotesque, pretentious structure in downtown Los Angeles, a fitting image for the perversion of the hierarchy of technical reason he has ascended. He is a somewhat paranoid recluse, but Roy finally tracks him down and cuts his way into his suite by matching wits with

him in chess—a symbol of the logical game of high stakes in which the two are locked. Tyrell seems to have known of this meeting for some time. "Roy? I wondered what took you so long," he says, to which Roy responds with taunting ambiguity: "It's not easy to meet your maker."

Tyrell: Then—what can he do for you?
 Roy: Can the maker repair what he makes?
 Tyrell: Would you like to be—modified?
 Roy: I had in mind something a little more radical.
 Tyrell: What seems to be the problem?
 Roy: Death.
 Tyrell: Well—I'm afraid that's a little out of my jurisdiction.
 You—
 Roy: I want more life—Father!

In what follows, Tyrell tells Roy "the facts of life," as it were, that the termination dates are irrevocably set. As the ultimate finality of his fate sweeps over Roy, Tyrell continues with a trace of condescension, sensing a momentary advantage:

Tyrell: But—this—all of this is academic. You were made as well as we could make you.
 Roy: But not to last.
 Tyrell: The light that burns twice as bright burns half as long—and you have burned so very, very brightly, Roy. Look at you! You're the prodigal son—you're quite a prize!
 Roy: I've done—questionable things.
 Tyrell: Also extraordinary things! Revel in your intelligence!
 Roy: Nothing that God or bio-mechanics wouldn't let you in Heaven for.

Roy then takes Tyrell's head in his hands, and, with tears streaming down his face, kisses his maker. Then the grip tightens, bone crushes, Tyrell's thick trifocals jerk upward, and Roy's thumbs depress the remainder of Tyrell's vision into the recesses of his dying brain. Unable to coerce the human agent-maker into investing his agency with immortality, Roy is full of wrath at his dependency. Of superior strength, however (just as the monster reminds Victor Frankenstein he is), at least the agency can destroy the agent as one great act of purpose before it expires itself.

There is, however, more to Roy than killing his maker. Predictably, Roy and Deckart must work out their own confrontation, and when that occurs on the mouldy, gargoyle-infested rooftops of the Los Angeles "skyline," it is clear where the advantage lies. Roy "plays" with Deckart in a manner reminiscent of Gloucester's lament in *King Lear*: "As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods. They kill us for their sport" (Shakespeare, 1968). But Roy is having his own problems; his termination date is upon him and he can feel his own system begin to shut down as he pursues the helpless Deckart from ledge to ledge. "Not yet!" Roy implores Fate, driving a rusty spike through his own hand in a desperate attempt to preserve the feeling. Deckart, his strength and options exhausted, clings precariously to a ledge high above the streets below, waiting for Roy to find him, kick his fingers loose, and end the agony. Roy arrives, holding—of all things—a white dove. As Deckart's grip fails, Roy's

nail-pierced hand shoots downward, fastens onto Deckart's wrist with iron-clad certainty, and hoists the bounty hunter to safety on the roof. A dying Roy reminds Deckart of humanity's irresponsibility toward its own products:

"Quite an experience to live in fear, isn't it? That's what it is to be a slave . . . I've seen things you people wouldn't believe. Attack ships on fire off the shoulder of Orion. I've watched seabeds glitter in the dark near the Tannhäuser gate. All those moments will be lost in time . . . like . . . tears . . . in rain. Time to die."

With that simple pronouncement, Roy succumbs as the dove wings heavenward.

Sitting alone in stunned silence, Deckart's voiceover muses:

"I don't know why he saved my life. Maybe in those last moments he loved life more than he ever had before—not just his life—anybody's life—my life. All he wanted were the same answers the rest of us want. 'Where do I come from?' 'Where am I going?' 'How long have I got?' All I could do is sit there and watch him die."

As compassionate as Roy's final act is, it is also an act of great pride: the "made," in his last hour, becomes "maker" and allows a human life to continue. Deckart's survival is determined by Roy. Agency, once again, plays agent, and reaffirms in his act of mercy the predicament of the human agent's loss of purposive action.

Deckart is rescued from the rooftop by a cynical, rather disagreeable detective with the curious habit of leaving paper animals fashioned out of napkins and other scraps as tiny mementos of his presence. "You've done a man's job, sir. I guess you're through, huh?" "Finished," Deckart whispers. The detective starts to leave, then pauses, and remarks knowingly, "It's too bad she won't live. But then again, who does?" The reference is, of course, to Rachel and the detective's awareness of Deckart's love for her. Deckart hurries back to his apartment, awakens Rachel, and the two quickly leave before the detective can assemble all the pieces and return to kill Rachel. The nervous couple scurries down the stairs, across the hardwood floor, and into Deckart's helicopter, which will whisk them away from the decaying scene they inhabit. The rhetorical advocacy in Blade Runner is more advanced in teleological time than that of Rocky IV in two distinct ways. Rocky's path is essentially a regressive one of denying technology altogether. Blade Runner recognizes that, once created, technology cannot simply be done away with, and the film leaves the audience with two possibilities. Roy is techné torn loose from its human parent, bent on autonomy, and if not that, then destruction. The mating of Deckart and Rachel suggests not only the inevitability, but even the possible loveability, of our own artifice. The message, then, is ambivalent; it is not clear what technology's fate (and thus our own) will be.

The Terminator

As Deckart and Rachel leave, a ray of sunlight catches a silver reflection beneath Rachel's foot. It is a tiny unicorn crafted in minute perfection from aluminum foil. The detective had been there first, and in his own uncharacteristic act of charity, had left the sleeping Rachel at peace. The

unicorn, symbol of phallic fertility and resurrection, is—in its steely dress—an oxymoronic emblem of "metallic life." It is also an ironic announcement for the metal visitor of The Terminator, one for whom compassion is unknown.

From Blade Runner to The Terminator, we progress from Roy, whose origins trace back to genetic engineering, to the Terminator, whose roots grow from electric circuitry—itsself generated by machines. As Ellul foresaw, "When a new technical form appears, it makes possible and conditions a number of others" (1964, p. 61). In The Terminator, the narrative thread linking replicant to human agent has been severed. Roy, despite his molten contradictions and untamed impulses, is agent-created-agent, but the Terminator is agency-created-agent, and this "generation gap" in our desire for technological perfection has grave consequences. When replicants reproduce and perfect themselves, independent of human aid or intervention, the full horror of inflating our rational/technological capacities to their logical conclusion—autonomous technology—comes back, not merely to haunt us, but to hunt us.

Like Rocky IV and Blade Runner, The Terminator relies on numerous conventions which disguise its rhetorical posture. Easily dismissed as one more adventure in gratuitous violence, the film does exhibit the requisite amount of destruction and gore, with its share of grisly scenes guaranteed to elicit delightedly disgusted shrieks from the audience. Moreover, the science fiction plot is so intricately complex and convoluted that many undoubtedly despair of tracking it, settling instead for a steady diet of Arnold Schwarzenegger ripping hearts out of punks and pumping bullets into policemen.

But the plot is worth tracking as a route to the advocacy beneath the destruction. The story begins only nine years after the date in Blade Runner, and the setting is again poor, polluted, Los Angeles, only this time after a nuclear holocaust. The world is a garbage bin of metallic waste and an assortment of human bones. This apocalyptic Hell is controlled by machines created by computers. The machines are trying to eradicate the last vestiges of humanity, who fight back courageously in small bands of skintight-oriented guerillas. Slowly, agonizingly, the guerillas begin winning under the singular leadership of one John Connor. As the humans storm the computer's central "nerve center," the machines attempt one last, desperate move. They program an advanced machine—"a Cyborg 7," which is totally indistinguishable from a human—with one task: travel back through time to Los Angeles in 1984, before WW III, track down and kill Sarah Connor, the eventual mother-to-be of John Connor, the inspirational force behind the guerillas. For if Sarah Connor is killed before she gives birth to John, then perhaps the machines can complete their mission of liquidating humanity.

As the guerillas break down the machines' final defenses, they encounter the time-warp device and immediately surmise what has happened. Volunteers are requested, and John Connor's closest friend and confidant, Kyle Reese, steps forward. Reese's instructions, like those implanted in the terminator unit who went before him, are simple and final: go back to 1984 and kill the Terminator before he can kill Sarah Connor. Both the Terminator and Reese emerge naked from their electronic birth canal amid the hustle and bustle of 1984 Los

Angeles. The ensuing battle presents both machine and home sapien with a frighteningly dialectical choice—kill or be killed.

It has been noted elsewhere that modern myth may generate female heroines to lead humankind toward unity because feminine consciousness, as the opposite of masculine ego-consciousness, is most capable of recognizing its dangers and contextualizing its force (Rushing, 1985; Wilber, 1981). But at the outset of The Terminator, Sarah Connor seems light years removed from the person Kyle Reese has come to know only through stories in his own time as "The Legend." Sarah is initially a bad waitress in a Bob's Big Boy with no vision beyond surviving her ordeal with customers and feeding her pet Iguana. Yet despite these seemingly congenital limitations, Sarah has not regressed to the state of her bouncy roommate, Ginger, for whom a life-support system, not even disconnected during the act of love, is a Sony walkman. Totally tuned into technology, Ginger is tuned out of life (and eventually is "terminated").

As Sarah becomes increasingly cognizant of her situation through both the unrelenting attacks of the Terminator and the equally unrelenting rescues and on-the-run tuteleges of Kyle, she metamorphoses from an inept waitress into a first-rate combat warrior and an inspirational leader. She learns to drive vehicles at break-neck speed; to prepare a field dressing; to make pipe bombs from Karo syrup, turpentine, and gunpowder; and ultimately, to terminate the Terminator.

Where Ivan Drago developed a mechanized exterior covering a still human soul, the narratively more advanced Terminator presents a human persona with a technological core. He is but the latest triumph in an ongoing series of increasingly more sophisticated replicants in the film—all originating from technological sources. "They're the latest developments of the Cyborg Systems Model 101," Reese tells a totally disbelieving police psychiatrist. "The early 600 models had rubber skin; they were easy to detect. This one's the 900 series, light-weight fighting alloy interior and an undetectable human-like exterior. He bleeds, has bad breath, the whole bit. Very, very tough!"

The Terminator, like all the terminator units, acts in every sense of the term. "It was the Defense Network Computers," Reese reminisces to Sarah. "New—very powerful—hooked into everything. Then they got smart. They figured all of humanity was the enemy. Our fate was decided in less than a micro-second—total extermination. Those who survived were rounded up, put into labor camps designed to incinerate the dead and masses. All the time, the network kept making machines of ever greater precision to eliminate us." The Terminator himself has a clearly defined purpose (to kill Sarah Connor), a rational set of strategic procedures ("He was just being systematic," Reese tells the police to explain why the Terminator killed all women with the name "Sarah Connor" who preceded the "Sarah Connor" in the Los Angeles telephone directory), the potential for improvisation as the situation may dictate (he imitates voices skillfully and elicits information from the police as well as from Sarah through "playing" her mother on the phone), and a knack for operating the most sophisticated weaponry in what must be, for him, an antiquated arsenal (his choice of weapons from a local gun shop would warm the heart of any reader of Soldier of Fortune magazine). His name suggests an ontological oxymoron: one does not speak of human homicide as "termination"; that is a term ordinarily reserved for the cessation of mechanical functions, which have no purpose other than to serve as agencies for human intention.

Yet, he flawlessly imitates the human capacity to act in his tracking of Sarah. In fact, that is both his name and his reason for being. (As a frustrated Reese tells the condescending police psychiatrist, "you still don't get it, do you? He'll find her—that's what he does—that's all he does!") Technology is pure purposive agent in the "person" of the Terminator. In terms of our narrative, he is the most complete transformation of agency into agent to date.

Not only does the Terminator act, but he no longer possesses any capacity—or need—to monitor his action morally. He is totally and finally cut free of bondage to humans. "You can't reason with him," Reese says—although he is the embodiment of technical reason. Whereas Frankenstein's monster pleaded with his creator to make a place for him in human society, and whereas *Blade Runner's* replicants at least found society with each other, the Terminator, as agency-created-agent, has no such need. This singular agent, in point of fact, wipes out an entire precinct of consensual police power with no more effort than we expend spraying a wasps' nest with "Raid." Unlike Drago or Roy, the Terminator is not bothered by the weaknesses of any human feeling. As his human exterior becomes increasingly torn through combat and decayed by the atmosphere, he discards his human trappings as we might remove soiled garments. In a particularly chilling scene, the Terminator opens his human-like arm with an exacto knife to re-adjust the rods and levers within. No sooner have we recovered from that little episode, than a more significant one begins. With the same clinical detachment, he deftly inserts the blade into his damaged eye, plucking the synthetic organ from its socket to fall, oyster-like, into a blood-filled sink. But the real horror of the scene is not so much the mutilated "human eye" as it is the demon-red glow behind the place it used to occupy. Human "parts" are now irrelevant. As Arthur Clarke once put it, "Can the synthesis of men and machine ever be stable, or will the purely organic component become such a hindrance that it has to be discarded?" (1964, p. 212).² As the Terminator's outer shell continues to decay, turning his face into a nesting ground for flies, he sits on a bed in a seedy hotel plotting his next move. An equally squalid janitor hollers through the door, "Hey Buddy, Ya gotta dead cat in there?" The Terminator prepares a measured, computerized response, "Fuck you, asshole!" The entire scene seems a particularly rich materialization of Burke's darkly humorous observation that the human race is "rotten with perfection."

The Terminator's anti-narrative is filled with the profaning of religious symbolism. Three times the audience sees what it is sure is the end of the Terminator; twice it is wrong. The first hope occurs when he emerges, staggering, engulfed in flames, from an oil tank truck that Reese has blown up. As a wounded and exhausted Reese embraces an equally spent Sarah, the Terminator, all human vestiges now burned away, rises up from his own ruins as a purified alloy—god-bent on a final mission. Later, in Reese's self-sacrificial act, the steel replicant is blown in half by the last pipe bomb. Again, exhausted viewers sigh; again he rises, as if the bomb were no more than an inconvenience. Crawling now, his torso pursues the injured Sarah through the assembly line maze of a metal recycling plant. Sarah drags herself across a giant compressor unit, and as the Terminator's better half is about to reach her, she activates the unit and finally recycles him. The Terminator is not "re-humanized" like Drago, nor does he expire through advance human programming like Roy; rather, he is "contained" on an automated assembly line, probably similar to the one on which he was first created.

By the end of the film—after Kyle has impregnated Sarah with the seed which will become John Connor, after Kyle himself has been killed in a last-gasp effort to destroy the Terminator, and after Sarah has finally succeeded in doing just that—we see a pregnant Sarah, possessed now by a total vision of her duty, driving a jeep into Mexico. Dark clouds gather and the distant rumble of thunder points to more than a high desert storm—the nuclear holocaust approaches. Aware of the technological devastation awaiting her community by "beings" with no such need, her concern for human continuity is awakened. As she drives, Sarah tape records for her unborn son the events that have so recently transpired. She creates an oral history (a real one, unlike the one Tyrell gave Rachel), a narrative fibre so that the fragmented outposts of humanity that would survive might never lose touch with their own roots, their own identity, their own potential. Although this ending imparts a slightly less ominous tone to the story than the immediately preceding scene, it is left unclear who will prevail in the battle to come, and whether humanity can recontact its origins and fulfill its potential—with so many terminator units at large in the world.

Thus far, we have traced the mythic evolution of technology's perfection of itself, as represented in three films. Technology, as the extension of one part of the human being—the capacity for technical reason—has been shown to be in the process of metamorphosing from agency carrying out human purpose into agent carrying out a purpose of its own. It remains for us to consider what this myth implies concerning the state of the whole human being, as well as for the possibilities of reclaiming technology as an integral, rather than separated, part of humanity.

The Loss of Human Aura

Burke continually stresses the continuity among the terms of his pentad, emphasizing that, even if one wants to highlight one of the terms as figure, the rest of them always come into play as ground: "...if you reduce the terms to any one of them, you will find them branching out again; for no one of them is enough" (1969, p. xxi). His analogy between the pentad and the human hand is particularly revealing:

The margins of overlap provide opportunities whereby a thinker can go without a leap from any one of the terms to any of its fellows. (We have also likened the terms to the fingers, which in their extremities are distinct from one another, but merge in the palm of the hand. If you would go from one finger to another without a leap, you need but trace the tendon down into the palm of the hand, and then trace a new course along another tendon.) Hence, no great dialectical enterprise is necessary if you would merge the terms, reducing them even to as few as one; and then, treating this as the 'essential' term, the 'causal ancestor' of the lot, you can proceed in the reverse direction across the margins of overlap, 'deducing' the other terms from it as its logical descendants (1969, p. xxi).

In tracking the development of the technology myth, we have essentially been going "from one finger to another" by way of the palm of the hand—that is, the agency of technology is able to transform into counter-agent (travel from one finger to another), only because agency and agent share in the substance of the whole human drama (the palm of the hand). As the myth progresses from Drago to

Roy to the Terminator, however, it is as if one of the fingers (agency) slowly severs itself from the palm and, rather than lose its organic potential as we might expect, begins to spontaneously regenerate. In addition to producing more appendages very similar to itself, it proceeds to reproduce the entire hand again. Having lost its previous connections with the palm, the new hand is created on the entirely new terms of the separated finger (agency). That is, as technology-as-agency grows more and more distant from its parent agent and transforms into technology-as-agent, it recreates the scene, redefines its purpose, manufactures "improved" agencies, and begins to act on its own. A new pentad (a new drama) begins.

The myth of autonomous technology offers many clues about this nascent drama. The scene, for instance, is in process of transformation. It is a central hypothesis of the theory of autonomous technology, according to Winner, that "technologies are structures whose conditions of operation demand the restructuring of their environments." Indeed, the environment has undergone radical restructuring from the time of Frankenstein's monster to the present. The end of *Frankenstein*, it may be recalled, follows the monster out into the vast, frozen frontier of the Arctics, a natural space, unbounded by walls and untouched by technology. Lately the monster's offspring, however, have populated the frontier until it exists no more, and the scene for latter-day confrontations between human and monster has gotten progressively smaller, more polluted, more imploded. Rocky fights Drago (as he has fought his series of progressively more technologized villains) in the tight, encircled, smoke-filled space of a boxing ring. Roy meets his maker inside a skyscraper apartment within a claustrophobic city that is so foul it does not even appear to be "out-of-doors." And Sarah terminates her foe inside an airless automated factory by crushing him with the machinery. What awaits her is a world whose entire landscape has been transformed by the machinery she fought. (In light of this transmogrified scenery, Rocky's attempt to lead us back to the frozen frontier may be heroic, but it is certainly naive.)

This compression of space in the myth not only illustrates the conditions that tend to obtain physically from an over-proliferation of technology, but it also symbolizes the "psychic space" of humanity's problem. This is no longer the call of the wild, the challenge of the frontier, where a person is tested against the power of natural forces; neither is this a war on foreign ground where an external enemy must be victimized in order that "our side" be purified. Rather, the battleground is small (deceptively small), polluted, and contained within our own selves.

This new space "sets the scene," then, for agency-turned-agent to define its own purpose, just as a child who leaves home finds it easier to create his or her own goals in life when not confined to the territory of the parents. As we have seen, the more distant agency grows from agent (the more it becomes agent itself), the more likely it is to kill off the original agent—just as an adolescent must symbolically "kill" the parent in order to mature in his or her own way—and the more likely it is to reproduce itself (produce its own agencies) without aid of the parent agent. When technological motion becomes purposive action, the "family tree" is a threat and must be terminated. Winner explains: "Once underway, the technological reconstruction of the world tends to continue. Anything that cannot be adapted is eliminated" (1977, p. 209). To return to Burke's metaphor, the rebel finger destroys the hand that used to feed it.

Assuming that humanity has not (yet) been eliminated, what are the interim consequences of this separation on the human agent? Writing of the effects of mass production in the modern era on the work of art, Walter Benjamin notes that "...that which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of the work of art" (1969, p. 221). When copies are plentiful and cheap, of what special significance is the original? With respect to our narrative, a visual thread connecting the various time periods in *The Terminator* seems significant. In his post-war existence, Kyle Reese knows what Sarah Connor looks like only through a tattered photograph given to him by Sarah's son and Kyle's friend, John. He carries it back with him through time to our present, and uses it to identify her (one senses he has already fallen in love with her likeness before he meets "the real thing"). At the end of the current era, pregnant with her son, Sarah poses unwittingly for a beggar child in the desert who takes her picture and then sells it to her. Apparently, this mechanically reproduced image survives the coming holocaust, Sarah's own death, and Kyle's time travel; with the tape recording Sarah makes for her child (also a technological reproduction), it serves as the primary connecting link in the human narrative of that film. The copy survives the original. As human agency grows more distant from the "original" and reproduces itself into multiple variations, the myth seems to suggest, the "aura" of the original human agent is progressively lost and replaced with the allure of the reproduction.

At the same time, humans themselves progressively lose contact with their own origins—that is, the whole, undivided self. This loss of origins is a theme addressed in the literary practice of deconstructionism. The history of Western thought, the deconstructionists observe, is grounded in the belief that permanent truth emanates from the uncontested self-presence of the human agent. As the most direct expression of self-presence, speech and its phonocentric offshoots define the path to the origins of the self and, thereby, to immutable truth. But, at every juncture point in the evolution of phonocentric speech, they argue, oral language is always already predetermined by writing, by an inscriptional system whose own meanings are couched in the endless play of differences among signs. If the truth of self-presence is rooted in an origin of ever-changing inscriptional differences and not in the spoken word, then there is no self-presence upon which to base permanence.

Our highly compressed simplification of deconstruction hardly does justice to the general practice or to the numerous variations which have developed. However, the co-occurrence of deconstructionism in intellectual thought and autonomous technology in the mythic imagination is not, we think, purely coincidental. Frankenstein's offspring, as the myth goes, are busily occupied reproducing themselves into monsters who track down their parents (i.e., the indivisible human self) so that they might be dismembered and emptied of self-presence. So, too, do deconstructionists go after the same former "master." A common occupation is to demonstrate, piece by piece, how language itself (supposedly the infallible sign of self-presence) reveals the contradictions and impermanence within itself. The deconstructionist practitioner, then, merely aids language in dismembering itself. Terry Eagleton describes the typical so-called "closed text" of Anglo-American deconstructionist critics:

Such texts are closed precisely because they are empty: there is little to be done with them beyond admiring the relentlessness with which all position particulates [sic] of textual meaning have been

dissolved away. Such dissolution is an imperative in the academic game of deconstruction: for you can be sure that if your own critical account of someone else's critical account of a text has left the tiniest grains of 'positive' meaning within its folds, somebody else will come along and deconstruct you in turn. Such deconstruction is a power-game, a mirror-image of orthodox academic competition. It is just that now, in a religious twist to the old ideology, victory is achieved by kenosis or self-emptying: the winner is the one who has managed to get rid of all his cards and sit with empty hands (1983, p. 147).

Like Frankenstein's descendants, the deconstructionists are commonly considered ill-tempered villains, and are popularly reviled. We would suggest, however, that these literary aficionados are mirroring their technological counterparts (whom they probably intuit are always already destroying self-presence)—the deconstructionists are not really destroying anything themselves; rather, they are demonstrating how language, as the prime representative of the human being, empties itself. Since technology is, at least before it splits off from the family tree, a part of the human being, we may also say that, in the myth of autonomous technology, humanity empties itself. Thus, the deconstructionists and the replicants belong to the same general myth, and they are both "rotten with perfection."

In the myth of autonomous technology, then, humankind stands at a perilous axis, detached both from its origins and its future. As rhetoricians, we might well inquire into the consequences of this predicament on consensual decision-making—on the ability of the agent to reason practically with other agents in order to act in the modern polis. On the one hand, the loss of origins means a loss of a shared moral telos, and its replacement with individualistic ends (see MacIntyre, 1987). On the other hand, the fear of rebellious technology produces, in the non-expert public, a sort of resigned somnambulism, and in the technically elite, an attempt to control it through the production of more technology. That is, if the results of technical reason get out of control, then the uninformed depend passively on the informed to remedy the situation by producing more reason. A paradoxical situation ensues that, we believe, calls into question the notion of a rational, informed "public" capable of making consensual choices to guide its future: the more we try to control nature (and then technology itself) with technical reason, the more technical reason controls us (and the more the general public becomes uninformed). If it is "reasonable" to tailor means to meet ends, and if the end is control of technology, then, by attempting to be rational, we are actually irrational. And since we have no shared telos other than what is best for the individual, we have no higher end within which to contextualize our largely ineffectual attempts to unify ourselves in order to fight this "devil" of our own making. So, we redouble our efforts, and the situation gets worse.

As Winner makes clear, "members of the technological society actually know less and less about the fundamental structures and processes sustaining them," and for this reason, "the possibility of directing technological systems toward clearly perceived [sic], consciously chosen, widely shared aims becomes an increasingly dubious matter" (1977, pp. 295-296). The consequence, he claims, is that:

...the whole society runs off track. The idea that civilized life consists of a fully conscious, intelligent, self-determining populace making informed choices about ends and means and taking action on that basis is revealed as a pathetic fantasy (1977, p. 296).

The myth of autonomous technology, then, lends support to the growing number of rhetoricians who claim that the unchecked proliferation of technical reason is a threat, rather than a boon, to a fully participative rhetorical public (see Farrell, 1976; Farrell and Goodnight, 1981; Fisher, 1984; Goodnight, 1982; Rushing, 1986b).

The Redemption of Technology

If things have come to this, is there any hope that technology will be controlled before it is too late for the human agent? Although a few instances of the autonomous technology myth predict ultimate doom, the myth also reveals some small hope along with the dire warning, in addition to clues as to what should be done. Speaking of *Frankenstein*, Small writes: "The problem...is to meet the Monster and renew the dialogue broken off at the end of the novel" (1972, p. 300). Small also points out what we think is an advocacy present in all the stories—that this meeting cannot be arranged, for "All arrangements for the Monster, as attempts to manipulate what is itself a metaphor of the breakdown of manipulation, render an actual meeting more difficult" (1977, p. 293). Consistent with our earlier claim that fictional accounts of life with technology are more likely to be "religious" than purely scientific, the myth implies that the solution is not one of greater scientific control, but of essentially "religious" conversion (in the original sense of a "turning around" from the direction in which one has been headed).

When technology severs itself from the human agent, its narrative repeats that of humanity's fall from paradise (the separation of humankind from God that was the inevitable result of the rise of rational consciousness) found in so many myths of creation. Winner finds the story of *Frankenstein* to be "nothing new"; it is as old as the tale of Prometheus fashioning the human race from clay, Adam and Eve eating from the tree of knowledge, or other accounts "that depict the human species as an autonomous artifact of the gods. In this regard the notion of a living technology merely recapitulates the myths of our own beginnings—the rebellion and fall of man—and the ensuing harvest of troubles" (1977, p. 31). The theme of a lost paradise is abundantly present in *Frankenstein*, from its sub-title (*A Modern Prometheus*), to the scene in which the Monster teaches himself to read from an old copy of *Paradise Lost*. The story traces his descent from a noble savage to a hideous fiend—and its particular poignancy is that he knows this is happening to him, as he even tries to explain it to Victor. In one scene, the two meet at the top of a glacier after the Monster has committed one murder, and Monster promises Maker he will do him no harm, though he is physically stronger; in fact, he will remain his dutiful subject, if only Victor will acknowledge his existence and provide a place for him.

Remember, that I am thy creature; I ought to be thy Adam; but I am rather the fallen angel, whom thou drivest from joy for no misdeed. Everywhere I see bliss, from which I alone am excluded. I was benevolent and good; misery made me a fiend. Make me happy, and I shall again be virtuous (Shelley, 1934, p. 107).

It is Dr. Frankenstein's failure to redeem his own creation that then turns the Monster to evil. At the end of the story, after Frankenstein has died in the Arctic, the Monster tells the explorer Walton (who tries to save Frankenstein and actually tells the entire story in retrospect):

When I run over the frightful catalogue of my sins, I cannot believe that I am the same creature whose thoughts were once filled with sublime and transcendent visions of the beauty and the majesty of goodness. But it is even so; the fallen angel becomes a malignant devil (Shelley, 1934, p. 256).

It is instructive to compare the two "falls"—that of humanity from God and of technology from humanity. In most religions, the responsibility for the redemption of humanity is taken either by God, by humanity, or both. That is, God "calls" the people, and/or the people willingly reunite themselves with their creator. In the second fall, both options are again available, but we have seen what happens when technology takes it upon itself to meet its maker. If the human agent is to survive, claims the myth of autonomous technology, it will do so not through further control of its wayward agent, nor by fighting it on its own terms. The first tactic merely causes it to proliferate further, and the second treats technology as an equal antagonist—i.e., it affirms the consubstantiation of techne with humanity rather than the contextualization of techne within humanity. The redemption of technology requires, at least as a first step, a conversion of attitude from one of manipulation to one of conscious recognition—of volitional seeing.

The three films in the present narrative, as well as the original Frankenstein story, provide numerous examples of all the tactics—control, battle, seeing (and not seeing). In almost every case, the human choice is accompanied by the visual symbol of the eye; thus, its presence is always a clue as to what choice is being made. In myth, the eye is correlated with light, the sun, and consciousness (Neumann, 1954, p. 92); thus, going to sleep, as in "Sleeping Beauty" or "Rip Van Winkle," is a refusal or forgetting of consciousness, and waking up is an "awakening" of one's higher capacities. Immediately after he creates his prodigy, as Winner has noticed, Victor Frankenstein refuses to look at him and leaves the laboratory. "He is haunted henceforth not by the creature itself but by the vision of it in his imagination" (1977, p. 309). Later, when the two meet on the glacier, Victor cannot bear to look at his own creation, and the Monster himself, "with a touching simplicity, tries to 'relieve' him by putting his hands over Frankenstein's eyes, making him like the monkey who will see no evil" (Small, 1972, p. 164). Victor's refusal to "see" ultimately results in his own destruction.

The eye motif permeates the entire genre of Rocky films. In the original, Rocky asks to be cut during the fight so that the swelling in his eye will recede; the audience winces, but Rocky can now "see" Creed more clearly. In Rocky II, a pervasive worry is the permanent damage to that eye should Rocky fight again. By Rocky III the eye becomes associated with courage in the background song, "Eye of the Tiger." In Rocky IV it is the psychic capacity of inner vision, for it is only when Rocky cuts Drago beneath his eye that the Russian begins to "see" the monster he has become. Rocky's emphasis on seeing the results of technology, of course, accompanies his spiritual conversion in every film after the first (he doesn't get corrupted until the second)—he

"turns around" from his overly plush lifestyle and adopts a new attitude. What Rocky does not see, of course, is that, once faced, technology cannot then be ignored.

In Blade Runner, the eyes motif is just as prevalent as in Rocky and much more complex. As a symbol of the coming of ego-consciousness—the replacement of the dark unconscious with the light of solar reason—the eyes indicate enlightenment. But the image also accompanies the extremes of ego-consciousness, and in this guise, often appears enlarged, perverted, or endangered. The early scenes of Blade Runner contain many full-screen images of eyes, seemingly interspersed inexplicably between seedy landscapes of L.A. One of the engineers (Sebastian) makes toy replicants as companions for himself at home; they all have over-sized eyes. Roy's replicant friend, Priss, paints a grotesque black mask around her own eyes. One of the replicants (Leon) starts to gouge out the eyes of Deckart when Rachel shoots him. And of course, the aforementioned scene in which Roy confronts Tyrell represents the culmination of this gory replicant habit.

The similarity between this latter scene and the myth of Oedipus is striking. As is well known, Oedipus blinds himself upon discovering that he has killed his father and married his mother. In the present context, an evolutionary reading of this myth seems more apropos than the more famous one of Freud. Ken Wilber sees Oedipus as the myth of consciousness torn between the old chthonic matriarchate and the emerging patriarchate of ego-consciousness. He explains:

Oedipus puts out his own eyesight, blinds himself, using as a weapon the clasp symbolic of the old matriarchal system. But notice: this is not so much a bodily castration as a higher castration of eyesight, which is everywhere symbolic of knowledge, light, and solar reason. Oedipus destroys, castrates, his own individual ego-mind, and returns to the pre-personal bodyself or mother nature where he is therein 'disposed like dust' (1981, p. 239).

Oedipus was apparently not yet ready for the responsibility required of rational consciousness. But whereas Oedipus committed the sins of killing his father (denying solar reason) and marrying his mother (re-uniting with pre-consciousness) unknowingly and paid for them willingly by punishing himself, Roy commits the patricidal sin knowingly—punishing his "father", and not himself, for the crime of hasty creation. When he sees that Roy is a threat, Tyrell offers to "modify" him—that is, to keep him happy, and thus under control, through further technological application. But Roy is enraged at Tyrell's refusal to adequately prepare for his creations and to "see" the consequences of his own creative deeds, and when Roy realizes that Tyrell's offer of modification will not change his ontological status, he kills Tyrell by destroying the very source of his genius—and thus eliminates the possibility that the human agent might reassert control over its replicated children.

In The Terminator, the myth comes full cycle with a malign twist. Like his mythological prototype, the Terminator removes his own eye. Yet quite unlike the tragic Oedipus, the Terminator passionlessly mutilates his orb so that he might see better, freed from the damaged vision of his synthetic human disguise. If autonomous technology passes the crisis point beyond which the

vision of ego-consciousness has no control over its creations, those creations, much like the current cadre of deconstructionists, will dismantle the very center of human self-presence, revealing the horrid fear that beneath the fictive pretence of the permanence of rationality, all there is is the malevolent red glow of the abyss (much like the Satanic red "seeing eye" of HAL in 2001), the madness of the anti-narrative whose inscribed story of difference dismembers our own. Significantly, the humans in The Terminator do battle with technology—in so doing, they reaffirm its status as counter-agent, and it is unclear in whose hands the future victory will lie.

If the human redemption of technology demands an awakening—the ability to look straight at our artifice and see it for what it is—the task has become considerably more difficult since the time of Frankenstein. That Monster's predicament was that, at least in the beginning, he was ugly on the outside, but beautiful on the inside. He was immediately hated by everyone with whom he came in contact, not for what he was, but for how he appeared; none who looked at him saw him for what he was except a blind man, who alone had the inner vision to see the as-yet-uncorrupted inner beauty of the Monster. With Drago, Roy, and the Terminator, the monster has become increasingly beautiful on the outside and ugly on the inside. The replacement of the Frankensteinian era's ugly "industrialism" with the contemporary era's sophisticated "high tech" indicates the extent to which the inner rottenness of technology has been obscured by a glossy veneer. It is difficult to see something which makes our day-to-day life easier as repugnant.

If technology is to be redeemed, however, so the myth says, humanity must look directly at it, penetrating its surface brilliance to behold its interior malignancy. The task is the same as that of an individual dreamer: one's shadow figure (in Jungian terminology) is, as the part of oneself one would rather not see, quite loathsome, although it can, like Satan, take on the guise of great beauty and charm. In its frightening form, it chases the poor dreamer, who runs from it in fright and refuses to look it in the face. If the dreamer can gather the courage to gaze upon it directly, an amazing transformation can take place. The individual "owns" the shadow for the part of oneself it really is, it then loses its dark numinosity, and ceases to haunt the dreamer relentlessly. Of course, this is a lifelong task, and does not happen miraculously in one night.

So the task of humanity is likely to endure for its lifetime; its collective shadow now seems to be more the technological replicant than anything else. It will take all the courage humankind can muster, as well as all of its determination to "see," to effect this transformation. The job requires no less than that the human agent re-contact its lost origins in the wholeness of Self, and re-claim its future as a part of that whole. Small captures the meaning of this process:

The Monster could only pray to Frankenstein, who rejected him; but in the last situation, when metaphor vanishes, it is not possible to reject him, for he is no longer separate, he is quite simply ourselves. When by his agency, which is ours, we are bereft of everything, we will forgive him for being us as he will forgive us for trying to deny it; by which, merged with each other, we may ask to be forgiven (1972, p. 331).

The conversion of technology is ultimately an act of reconciliation, of, quite literally, "getting ourselves together." The required effort is awesome, but the alternative is bleak. The redemption of technology is the redemption of ourselves.

NOTES

¹ Although the theme of autonomous technology is most commonly found in the genres of science fiction and/or horror, it is not completely limited to these. Because the myth transcends classification within any one genre, and because its evolutionary infancy is pervasive but less likely to be noticed in genres other than science fiction or horror, we have deliberately chosen a generic mixture for analysis here.

² Clarke thought that if this happens, "we have nothing to regret and certainly nothing to fear." The narrative explored here suggests otherwise.

³ Examples include On the Beach (1959), Dr. Strangelove (1964), and Testament (1983).

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